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THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING PROGRAM:  
BUILDING BRIDGES TOWARD A NEW WORLD ORDER

BY

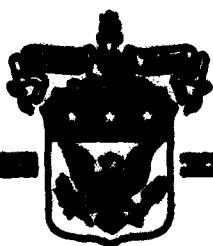
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29 May 1992

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050



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92-19225



## Unclassified

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS			
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY		3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.			
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION U.S. Army War College	6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) AWCA	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION			
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050		7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER			
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS			
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) The International Military Education and Training program: Building Bridges Toward A New World Order					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Trotter, Jesse J., Jr., COL					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Study Project	13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____	14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1992 MAY 29		15. PAGE COUNT 23	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES		18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)			
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP			
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)  The publication of the August, 1991 version of the National Security Strategy of the United States marked a watershed in the evolution of American defense planning by migrating from a forty year policy of containment to one emphasizing regional interests and threats. As DOD considers competing programs to support this regionally-based strategy, the International Military Education and Training Program (IMETP), which provides professional military education and technical training to foreign military personnel, is offered as a possible solution if the program is strengthened and expanded. This study places the IMETP into proper context with the other, larger components of the U.S. security assistance program, examines the dynamics that are currently affecting the program and proposes possible solutions to allow it to make a greater contribution. The study is based on primary source materials as well as interviews with current and retired security assistance officials and key Congressional staff personnel.					
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL HENRY L. VAN BREDERODE			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 717/245-3044	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL AWCA	

## **USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER**

**The International Military Education and Training Program:  
Building Bridges Toward a New World Order**

**AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT**

**by**

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## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Jesse J. Trotter, Col, USA

TITLE: The International Military Education and Training Program: Building Bridges Toward a "New World Order"

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 29 May 1992 PAGES: 21 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The publication of the August, 1991 version of the National Security Strategy of the United States marked a watershed in the evolution of American defense planning by migrating from a forty year policy of containment to one emphasizing regional interests and threats. As DOD considers competing programs to support this regionally-based strategy, the International Military Education and Training Program (IMETP), which provides professional military education and technical training to foreign military personnel, is offered as a possible solution if the program is strengthened and expanded. This study places the IMETP into proper context with the other, larger components of the U.S. security assistance program, examines the dynamics that are currently affecting the program and proposes possible solutions to allow it to make a greater contribution. The study is based on primary source materials as well as interviews with current and retired security assistance officials and key Congressional staff personnel.

"The bonds of collective security can be strengthened greatly, particularly with lesser developed nations, through programs designed to aid friends and allies to meet the needs of their countries. Through security assistance, the United States can demonstrate commitment, reinforce alliance cohesion, build upon bilateral relations, and provide a moderating influence vital to regional stability and cooperation. The use of U.S. equipment, training, and professional military education can increase U.S. influence, foster interoperability, and build relationships which help create the sympathetic global infrastructure crucial to effective crisis response."

-----National Military Strategy - 1992

## INTRODUCTION

Mid-way through 1991, the United States found itself the world's only superpower. the implosion of the former Soviet Union led to victory in the Cold War; subsequent victory for the U.S.-led coalition in the Persian Gulf War validated American primacy. These two events, paradoxically, presage the most fundamental shift in national security policy since containment became the national strategy more than forty years ago.

With the realization that a containment-based strategy was no longer necessary since no major, discernible threats to U.S. security were apparent and unaffordable given domestic economic priorities, the publication of the August, 1991 version of the National Security Strategy of the United States by the Bush Administration marked a clear watershed in the evolution of American defense planning. By migrating from the policy of containment to one emphasizing regional interests and threats in an international environment that promised to be more complex, more volatile and less predictable, the new strategy has spawned a cottage industry dedicated to shaping and refining what American security priorities could, and should, be.<sup>1</sup>

As the Department of Defense wrestles with competing programs to accommodate and support this regionally-based strategy, extreme caution must be taken to carefully evaluate the tools available, particularly in light of rapidly diminishing defense resources. Miscalculation by denying adequate funding to vital programs or, conversely, by wasting scarce dollars on programs that do not clearly advance the national strategy will ultimately result in erosion of public confidence so carefully nurtured since the mid-1970s and an even more precipitous reduction in resources entrusted to the U.S. defense establishment. As Robert Hunter argues, "In the post-Cold War era, the United States needs a zero-based foreign policy, in which each element must justify its relevance and importance anew or be discarded in favor of another

course that is more pertinent to the future, whether that course emphasizes continued involvement in different parts of the world or a greater detachment in order to master problems and needs at home."<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to critically examine the International Military Education and Training Program (hereafter referred to as "IMETP"), the smallest component of an overall U.S. Security Assistance Program that allocates over \$8 billion annually to friends and allies. The IMETP, which since its inception in 1976 has received funding that averages just over \$41 million a year, is responsible for providing professional military education and technical training to allied military and civilian officials, exposing them to American military professionalism with an implied mission of positively influencing them upon their return to their home countries.<sup>3</sup>

This study will attempt to place the IMETP into proper context with the other, much larger components of the Security Assistance Program, examine the dynamics that are currently affecting the program and, finally, to postulate possible solutions that will allow the IMETP to play a more pivotal role in support of a regionally-based national security strategy and the structuring of a "New World Order" fully compatible with American democratic values.

## A SECURITY ASSISTANCE OVERVIEW

The objectives of the U.S. Security Assistance Program are broadly focused to support American interests by:

- ♦ Fostering democratic values and institutions as well as human rights in recipient nations;
- ♦ Enhancing the ability of allies to defend themselves while, at the same time, accepting a larger share of common defense burdens;

- ◆ Facilitating mutually beneficial defense agreements with friends and allies while maintaining unrestricted U.S. access to strategically important military facilities around the world;
- ◆ Via arms transfer controls, enhancing regional stability by restricting the introduction of potentially de-stabilizing weapons systems;
- ◆ Strengthening market-oriented economies in recipients of U.S. security assistance.

To meet these objective, the U.S. Security Assistance Program is comprised of three predominantly grant-based programs, in addition to the IMETP. By far the largest of these is the Foreign Military Financing Program (FMFP) which helps friendly governments acquire military hardware, services and training from the United States on a largely grant basis, although some low interest loans are available. During fiscal year (FY) 1991, nearly \$4.26 billion of the FMFP total of \$4.71 billion were provided on a grant basis. This figure rose to \$4.61 billion in FY 1992 and the Administration has requested authority to provide \$4.1 billion in grant aid during FY 1993.<sup>4</sup> In essence, the FMFP serves as the financing vehicle for all Foreign Military Sales (FMS) system purchases by countries that cannot afford direct cash procurements. It must be emphasized that while the FMFP can fund "services", e.g., equipment rehabilitation, and "training" to recipient countries, it is first and foremost a hardware and weapons systems program.

A second sub-set of the Security Assistance Program is the Economic Support Fund (ESF), administered by the Agency for International Development (USAID), which provides grant assistance to allies to foster internal economic development and reform, as well as counter-narcotics assistance. Examples of typical ESF program funding may be the construction of typhoon-proof schools in the Philippines, water projects for El Salvador, or coastal surveys for Thailand. ESF grant obligations during FY 1991 totalled \$4.1 billion; in

FY 1992, the program provided grants worth \$3.2 billion with another \$3.1 billion projected for FY 1993.<sup>5</sup>

The Security Assistance Program also provides funding assistance to sustain international peacekeeping operation (PKO) that support and advance U.S. national security interests. Current expenditures include support for United Nations personnel in Cyprus, U.N. inspection teams in Iraq and the multinational force implementing the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. Historically, PKO expenditures have been modest with \$32.8 million appropriated in FY 1991, \$28 million in FY 1992 and \$27.3 million projected for FY 1993. To sustain new and anticipated peacekeeping requirements this year, specifically in El Salvador and Cambodia, the Administration has requested an additional \$350 million for FY 1992.<sup>6</sup>

The final component of the Security Assistance Program is the IMETP, which, as previously noted, provides foreign officers and enlisted personnel with the opportunity to travel to the United states to take military courses with their American counterparts. The program currently trains approximately 5,000 allied students annually; since 1950, the IMETP and its predecessor programs have accounted for the training of over 500,000 allied military personnel.<sup>7</sup>

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, establishes three primary goals of the current program: to encourage relations and increase understanding between the United States and its allies in order to advance the goals of international security; to improve the capabilities of foreign nations in utilizing military equipment, articles and services received from the United States, thus enhancing their self-reliance; and to increase the understanding of participating personnel of fundamental issues regarding internationally recognized human rights.<sup>8</sup>

To these broadly stated goals, several others should be considered as "implied": standardization of weapons and doctrine, thus enhancing readiness and interoperability; improvement of overall operations and maintenance skills; increased access to future key leaders of foreign militaries and governments; and finally, to provide an affordable alternative to training offered by potential adversaries to the United States.

IMETP training emphasis is clearly oriented on those leadership and defense management skills obtained through Professional Military Education (PME) courses at basic, intermediate and senior U.S. service schools (basic branch and advanced courses, command and general staff colleges, and the service war colleges) although technical training, on-the-job-training, orientation tours for senior personnel and some on-site training (mobile teams that conduct technical training overseas) is provided. Each foreign student is required to either demonstrate proficiency in English or complete an "English as Second Language" course prior to enrolling in the service school.

Additionally, each foreign student is exposed, as an integral part of his training, to a voluntary "Informational Program" designed to provide background and insight into American society, government institutions and basic American values. While voluntary, evidence suggests that the vast majority of foreign trainees participate in the program, driven, it appears, by an intense curiosity about things American. For many observers, even those critical of the overall security assistance concept in general and the IMETP in particular, this exposure to the American way of life including civilian authority over the military, respect for basic human rights and the rule of law, either through formal orientations or more informal daily contacts with American colleagues, their families and the U.S. public at large, constitutes one of the most important, and potentially highest impact, aspects of the program.

Significant numbers of IMETP graduates return home and rise, over time, to positions of exceptional prominence in either their own service or defense establishment, or their governments. A survey conducted by the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA), covering the period FY 1984-1989, revealed that 1,067 former IMETP students had risen to such prominent positions as the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (or equivalent); Chiefs of Service; Commander at Army or Corps level (or comparable Air Force or Navy elements); heads of agencies, training commands or military academies; attaches to major world capitals or senior NATO officials. Still others had become heads of state, ministers of national defense (or equivalent), ambassadors or national business leaders. An additional 1,442 graduates had risen to general or flag officer rank in their individual services.<sup>10</sup>

Two points concerning the DSAA survey deserve emphasis. First, only those personnel with proven records of achievement and exceptional potential are selected for training in the United States. These personnel would probably have risen to professional prominence without the IMETP training although this is impossible to prove. Regardless, they are the allied and friendly leaders we will depend on for access, cooperation and support during future contingencies and the IMETP has provided the opportunity to influence and positively interact with them. Second, the IMETP must be considered a long-term investment in people, concepts and ideas. In other words, there is no "instant gratification" implicit in the providing of training as there may be in the sale of equipment or services to an ally. This is particularly true from the U.S. viewpoint. A communications system provided to an ally, for example, can produce immediate, obvious and verifiable improvements in his ability to command and control his forces. The success of today's IMETP, particularly in terms of access, influence and allied cooperation, may take ten or fifteen years until it can be determined.

A primary reason that the IMETP is so attractive to allies as a source of military training in the United States is its low cost, relative to other available U.S. programs. As illustrated in **FIGURE 1**, the cost differential for a representative sampling of popular Professional Military Education (PME) courses provided by the IMETP and the identical courses obtained through the FMS system is striking.<sup>11</sup>

<u>TRAINING COST COMPARISON: IMET VERSUS FMS</u>		
	IMET	FMS
USAWC	\$ 12,420	113,992
USACGSC	\$ 6,206	34,104
INFANTRY OFF ADV	\$ 3,263	11,391
ARMOR OFF ADV	\$ 3,106	20,886
SIGNAL OFF ADV	\$ 3,838	22,374

SOURCE: DSAA, 'MILITARY ARTICLES AND SERVICES LIST, 1992'

**FIGURE 1**

IMETP pricing reflects only the bare bones costs borne by the United States to provide the training and is designed to encourage foreign participation in the programs. FMS pricing, on the other hand, reflects the "fair share" paid by foreign nations for such items as salaries, pensions and benefits for instructor and support personnel and those sunk costs of maintaining school facilities.<sup>12</sup> The training received under either IMETP or FMS is identical.

Generally, however, FMS training procured through FMFP financing or on a strictly cash basis is related to systems purchases. A country buys a system, e.g., M60 tanks, and then purchases maintenance or operator training to effectively utilize the hardware. IMET has traditionally been PME-related. Under any circumstances, however, the price differentials remain startling.

The benefits of the Security Assistance Program to the United States during OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM were both real and substantial. As the Chief of Security Assistance Plans, Policy and Training, U.S. Central Command notes:

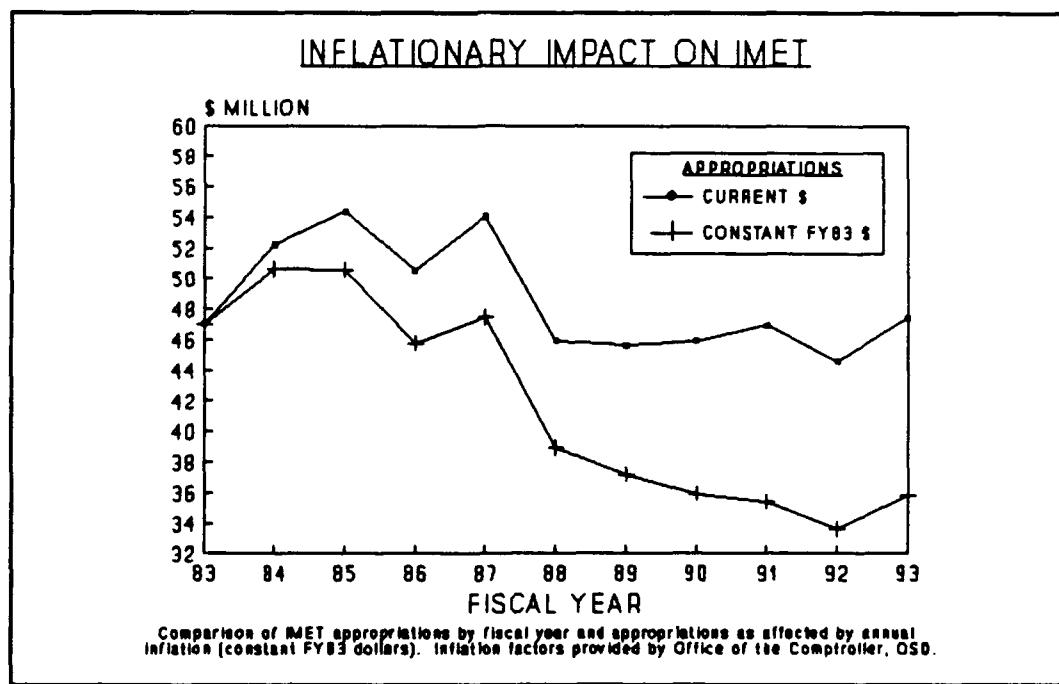
"Security assistance proved critical to the success of USCENTCOM's coalition warfare strategy throughout Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Military equipment sales enabled regional countries to contribute to their own defense: notable examples are Saudi F-15s, Egyptian M-60 tanks and Kuwaiti A-4s. In fact, we had a security assistance relationship with all but two of our thirty-odd coalition allies. More important for U.S. interests was our ability to deploy into the region, rapidly achieve operational status and carry out combined operations. Interoperability, achieved through common weapons and support systems, facilities and training provided by security assistance programs, provided us this ability.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, as the regionally-based national security strategy matures and coalition warfare becomes an accepted norm, the role of the IMETP as a "combat multiplier" by providing allied military personnel familiar with American combat doctrine and procedures becomes even more critical.

#### **DYNAMICS AFFECTING THE PROGRAM**

If, as the quote from the National Military Strategy at the beginning of this paper indicates, U.S. influence can be increased, interoperability fostered and global relationships strengthened through security assistance, particularly "...training, and professional military

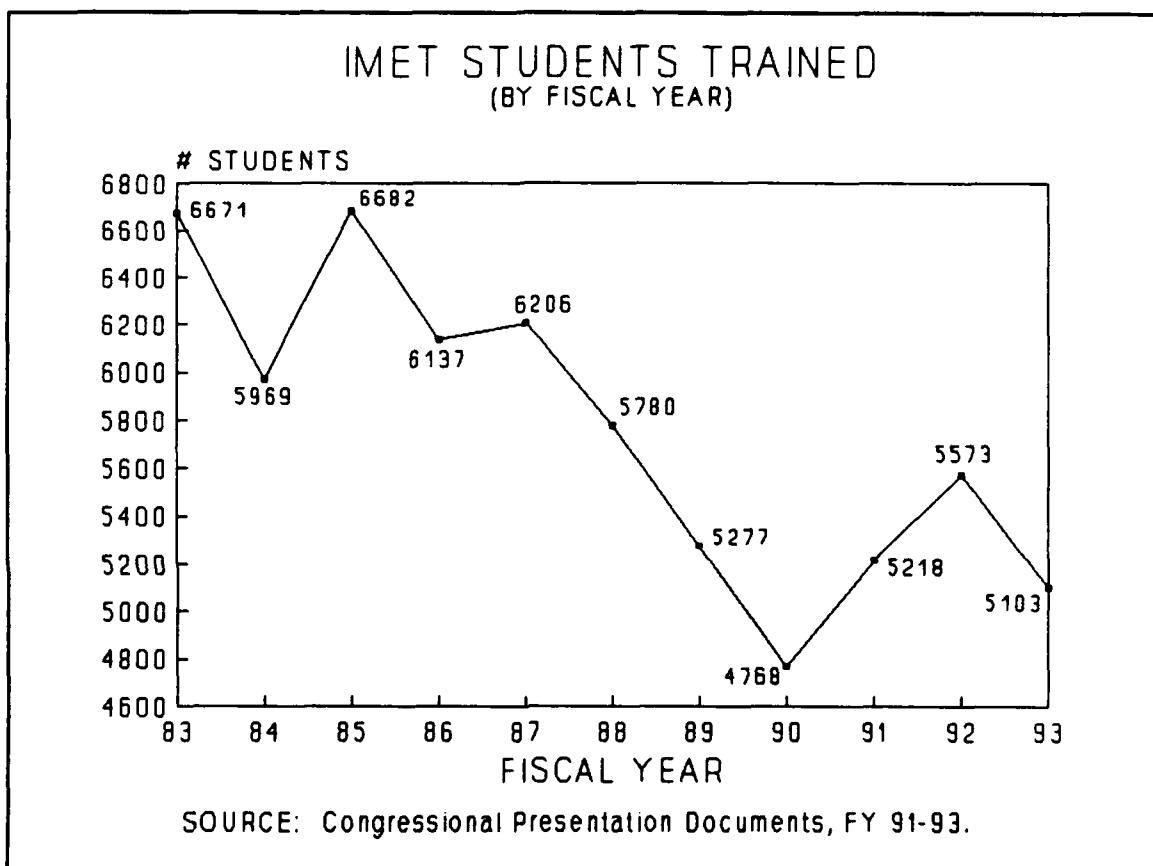
education," then the International Military Education and Training Program must be considered a critical component of our national strategy and informed consideration should be given to enhancing and expanding the program.

The history of the program indicates that this has not been the case. The IMETP has traveled the same fiscal road as most other defense programs, benefitting from the largesse of the Reagan buildup in the early and mid-1980s and declining significantly in the past several years as economic priorities moved defense spending to the back burner. As FIGURE 2 illustrates, IMETP funding began to decline after FY 1987 and proposed program funding for FY 1993 closely reflects that of FY 1983, ten years before. When inflation factors are applied, the downturn in program funding has been even more precipitous. The bottom line is that, when compared to the other, larger components of the U.S. Security Assistance Program, IMETP funding has annually represented less than 1% of the total.



**FIGURE 2**

The effect of these funding reductions is very apparent in **FIGURE 3**, which depicts the numbers of friendly and allied students trained annually in the United States. Here the dropoff is even more severe, ranging from a high of 6,671 students in FY 1983 to a low of 4,768 students in FY 1990 with only 5,103 students projected for FY 1993.



**FIGURE 3**

The remainder of this paper will consider the dynamics at play that are affecting the IMETP and advance some possible solutions to strengthen the program.

As the national security policy of the United States is evolving, so too is the IMETP. Two recent initiatives reflect both a reallocation of critically scarce resources and a new emphasis on the training of civilian officials who hold responsible positions within the defense establishments of friendly foreign governments. During FY 1990, IMETP funding for

countries that were more fiscally solvent was significantly reduced or, in some cases, eliminated altogether. It was felt that these countries, who possessed an annual per capita GNP above \$2,349 could afford to fund training in the United States either through direct cash purchases or other security assistance mechanisms, e.g., FMFP. The result of this initiative was to maintain the number of recipient nations at about 113 for FY 1993, while allowing some newcomers to enter the program.<sup>14</sup>

The second initiative, called the "Expanded IMET Initiative," is a program directed by Congress in 1991 and designed specifically to educate foreign civilian leaders in human rights, broad resource management principles, U.S. principles of civilian control over the military, and the principles of law. In courses taught at U.S. military schools, the focus is on professional-level training in management of defense ministries, forces and budgets and the creation of military justice systems, with special emphasis paid to the protection of human rights.<sup>15</sup> This "Expanded IMET Program" grew out of the continuing congressional concern that the duly elected or appointed civilian leaders in many countries did not have the requisite training to adequately guide and, more importantly, control their professional military establishments. Congress earmarked \$1 million (of the total FY 1991 IMETP appropriation of \$47 million) to pay for this initiative. Response to the "Expanded IMETP" has been excellent and DoD has determined to fund the program at \$2 million in FY 1992 and \$2.5 million in FY 1993.<sup>16</sup> No plus-ups to the IMETP appropriation are anticipated to cover the program; in other words, it will be taken "out-of-hide."

Perhaps even more encouraging than the successes of the "Expanded IMET Program" are to date, are the entry of several eastern European countries and the republics of the former Soviet Union. During FY 1991, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland became first-time IMET recipients. FY 1992 will see the entry of Bulgaria, Albania, Estonia, Latvia and

Lithuania into the program. In FY 1993, Bulgaria will join the IMETP. Both DoD and the Department of State are currently working to encourage Russia, Mongolia and Ukraine to join other former Soviet bloc members in sending students to the United States for training. The training to be provided has not been determined but it is anticipated to include the U.S. Army War College, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, the Defense Resources Management College and probably an orientation tour.<sup>17</sup>

Because the IMETP budget is a relatively static one, with no positive growth for several years, the addition of these new nations means that several other countries will have to either receive reduced funding or, because of international political, legal or foreign policy concerns, be dropped from the program to make room. During FY 1993, for example, Sudan, Somalia, Zaire and Liberia, each with IMETP budgets of between \$700,000 and \$1 million, will be dropped from the program due to political or legal reasons. Similarly, Haiti, Thailand and Malaysia will be dropped due to recent anti-democratic coups or, in the case of Malaysia, for its "push off" policy concerning boat people.<sup>18</sup> With the IMETP operating in a "zero-sum" environment, these adjustments are both necessary and warranted.

In contrast to the positive changes to the IMETP represented by the income ceiling, training for foreign civilian defense administrators, and the inclusion of former enemies into the program, there have been initiatives proposed or taken that negatively affect the achievement of IMETP objectives.

The first of these, in bills submitted in the Senate in 1990 and again in 1991, would have prohibited the expenditure of any IMETP funding for courses designed to teach "nation-building" skills to foreign military personnel with the rationale that "military nation building can help tip the balance of power away from elected civilian leaders and toward unelected military rulers. By encouraging militaries to take on nation-building activities, the United

States is in practice giving the militaries legitimacy in assuming roles that put them in direct competition with civilian authorities."<sup>19</sup> Adoption of this argument by the full Congress would, of course, have seriously undermined basic security assistance objectives because regional stability depends in no small part on nations possessing strong internal infrastructures. In many cases, only the military has the capability to construct roads, dispensaries and water projects or manage basic communications capabilities. The argument fails to acknowledge the continuing contribution of our own Corps of Engineers to the maintenance of the American infrastructure. While not adopted by the Congress, the nation-building issue is included here to illustrate the extent of Congressional attention to the IMETP and the philosophies extant that may affect it in the future.

A second initiative, taken administratively by the Department of Defense, more seriously impacts the administration of the IMETP. As a result of the wholesale restructuring and reduction of the U.S. military following our Cold War victory, the ranks of key U.S. defense representatives overseas have been downgraded. These representatives, who hold titles as either Defense Attaches, Chiefs of Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAGs), or Chiefs of Offices of Defense Cooperation (ODCs), are key to ensuring that the IMETP receives appropriate emphasis within the host countries and that IMETP program objectives for both the host nation and the United States are complementary.

By 1993, defense attaches in Brazil, France and Mexico will have been downgraded from Brigadier General to Colonel; similarly, Chiefs of Offices of Defense Cooperation will have been downgraded from Major General or Brigadier General to Colonel and the Chiefs of Joint U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Groups in Korea, Thailand and the Philippines will be reduced from Brigadier General to Colonel.<sup>20</sup> While this may appear a reasonable, prudent step given the 25% reduction in U.S. military personnel strength anticipated by FY

1995, e.g., fewer troops mean fewer generals, it simply sends the wrong signal to our friends and allies around the world on the extent to which the United States is interested in them. In many cases, the holders of these offices represent the senior U.S. military official in country. To these nations, having a U.S. general officer to discuss IMETP needs and desires with equates to having influence with the U.S. government and reflects their relative importance in the eyes of America. Having to discuss the IMETP with a colonel may be a blow to their ego, and our influence.

If the IMETP is, indeed, "an effective, low-cost component of the U.S. security assistance effort...providing U.S. access to and influence [over] foreign governments for out of proportion to its modest cost,"<sup>21</sup> why has not the program grown? Why have appropriations been reduced to the extent that they have, thus reducing the opportunities for the key future military and civilian leaders of our allies for training in the United States? A thorough review of available public documents and extensive interviews with responsible Defense and Congressional officials indicates six primary reasons why the IMETP has remained fiscally static and, in fact, has declined in the contributions it can make to our national security strategy.

First, there is the impression that "if its not broken, don't fix it." The relative low visibility of the program and the fact that, by any measure, it is a small ticket item in a defense budget of big ticket items tends to diminish its importance in the eyes of Congress.

Second, there are no apparent economic benefits for the United States accruing from the IMETP. While this may be true, there clearly is value received from the access, influence and stability that the program provides.

Third, the IMETP has no built-in American constituency that can fight for greater appropriations. Again, a true statement but supporters of human rights should support the

IMETP since it aggressively advances human rights education.

Fourth, there is not a primary federal agency or official that consistently lobbies for the program. While both Departments of State and Defense have institutional responsibilities for the IMETP, key Congressional staffers indicated that a larger, more vigorous IMETP would be possible, even likely, if the Secretary of Defense or Secretary of State were to send a message to Congress just on the issue of IMETP funding. The prevailing view was "you need a constituency at State or Defense before you can expect one on the Hill."<sup>22</sup>

Fifth, the view in Congress that the U.S. uniformed military does not fully support IMETP<sup>23</sup>; that the reduced training establishment could not accommodate more foreign military trainees.<sup>24</sup>

And finally, that these successes of the program are not quantifiable, and are based almost solely on anecdotal material.<sup>25</sup> Again, a true statement but the anecdotal evidence is extremely strong and widespread with Secretaries of State, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Ambassadors, CINCs and other officials consistently singing the praises of IMETP.<sup>26</sup>

## **PREScriptions FOR THE FUTURE**

In view of the foregoing, there appears to be several steps that can be taken almost immediately to enhance the viability and visibility of the IMETP. First, if we intend to exert positive influence over former Soviet bloc countries, they must be aggressively integrated into the IMETP but not at the expense of other client states who need, and deserve, the training IMETP provides. If we assume minimal initial funding of \$300k for each former Soviet ally and for each of the new Republics, an immediate infusion of \$5-6 million is required over and above that funding already appropriated.

Second, two studies must be commissioned. The first, by the Department of Defense, would determine the capabilities of each of the military departments to absorb additional

foreign military and civilian trainees, in light of planned or on-going reductions in their respective training infrastructures. The second study, conducted jointly by State and Defense, would attempt to determine the capabilities of potential new client states to provide qualified students to the IMETP.

Third, We must halt the planned downgrading of senior U.S. military billets in those nations previously discussed and restore general officers to billets already downgraded.

Finally, the Administration has to rigorously take the lead to request IMETP funding increases from Congress, consistent, of course, with the results of the aforementioned studies. Given the number of current client states and, considering the addition of the eastern European countries and the republics of the former Soviet Union, a proposed increase in the neighborhood of 25% over the next five years does not appear unreasonable.

## **CONCLUSION**

As the U.S. defense establishment continues to shrink, both at home and more dramatically overseas, critical contacts with allied military leaders, both uniformed and civilian, will be diminished and eventually lost. These relationships have proven invaluable in the past and in the future may determine the success or failure of U.S. policies, programs and national objectives. An important way to nurture these relationships, so vital to coalition-building, is through training provided by the United States in the United States. For most nations, the only affordable U.S. training is that provided under the auspices of the U.S. International Military Education and Training Program (IMETP).

## ENDNOTES

1. For a coherent survey of the debate on emerging U.S. security strategies and priorities, see Don M. Snider and Gregory Grant, "The Future of Conventional Warfare and U.S. Military Strategy," The Washington Quarterly Winter, 1992, pp 203-228.
2. Robert E. Hunter, "Starting at Zero: U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1990s," The Washington Quarterly Winter, 1992, p. 31.
3. The IMETP averaged \$41,475,118 in congressional appropriations during the period 1976-1992. See Department of State and Defense Security Assistance Agency. 1992. Congressional Presentation For Security Assistance Programs, Fiscal Year 1993. p.72.
4. Ibid. pp 15, 19.
5. Ibid. pp 31-35.
6. Ibid. pp 37-39.
7. Spiro C. Manolas and Louis J. Samelson. 1990. "The United States International Military Education and Training Program: A Report to Congress," The DISAM Journal 12 (Spring), p. 8.
8. The authority and purposes of the IMETP are found in sections 541 and 543 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.
9. Fred A. Coffey, Jr. 1985. Best Dollar Spent: A Look at the Informational Program for Foreign Assistance, National War College, Washington, D.C., pp 1-41.
10. Manolas and Samelson, p. 31.
11. DSAA, Military Articles and Services Listing (MASL), 1992.
12. All pricing factors for military training conducted in the United States are contained in Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 7290.3.
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